

To: Governor

From: Buddy B.

Re: Short article for Civil War Preservation Trust Discovery Trail Guide

Date: January 22, 2007

The Civil War Preservation Trust asked for a 300-400 word article from you on your personal view of the Battle of Corinth. This will appear in their guide to various Civil War sites. The attached piece was drafted for your review by Sarah McCullough, who heads the Cultural Development office in our Tourism division.

Please take a look. Thank you.

As the Sesquicentennial of the beginning of the Civil War approaches, we as Americans have a unique opportunity to reflect on the complexity of the conflict that divided our nation. As Mississippians, we reflect on the impact of this conflict on our home state, of the burning of many of our towns and of the blood that was shed in small skirmishes and major battles across the state. From Corinth to Brice's Crossroads to Raymond to Vicksburg and countless points between, the tragedy of the Civil War left an indelible mark on Mississippi.

Of particular significance to Mississippians and, ultimately, to Americans, is the Battle of Corinth. In 1862, this small northeastern Mississippi town of 1,200 was crucial due to its location at the junction of the Memphis & Charleston and the Mobile & Ohio Railroads.

Over the next four years, the people of Corinth would see their town fall back and forth from Union to Confederate control and be overrun with over 300,000 troops. This beautiful and once-tranquil town would also see its homes turned to hospitals and its peaceful pastures turned into burial grounds.

Most of us in Mississippi were born and raised in small towns. To contemplate what it must have been like in that small Mississippi town during those turbulent years is more than we can imagine today. The perspective of history, however, has shown that the atrocities of Corinth eventually led to the end of the western theater of the Civil War, thus eventually leading to the conflict's end.

Therefore, the events in that small Mississippi town during that tragic time nearly a century and a half ago led to the America that we know today. The war led to the Emancipation Proclamation, which nearly one hundred years later would make possible the Civil Rights movement. The town of Corinth, with its Civil War-era homes, its moving cemetery, and its extraordinary Civil War Interpretive Center, remains a testament to the conflict that divided our nation and a reminder to Americans, and to Mississippians, of the necessity of unity.